

DELTA PROTECTION COMMISSION

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December 6, 1996

To: Delta Protection Commission

From: Margit Aramburu, Executive Director

Subject: Draft Report to the Governor and the Legislature on 1996 Activities

Section 29780 of the Delta Protection Act, requires the Commission to submit an annual report describing the progress in achieving the objectives of the Act. The report is to include an evaluation of the effectiveness of the regional plan in preserving agricultural lands, restoring delta habitat, improving levee protection and water quality, providing increased public access and recreational opportunities, and in undertaking other functions prescribed in the Act; an update of the regional plan, using baseline conditions set forth in the original regional plan; and the status of the environmental thresholds established by the Commission in the original regional plan.

Attached is a draft annual report on the Delta Protection Commission's activities for the year 1996:

Status of the Delta Protection Commission:

The Legislature approved and the Governor signed into law, SB 1673 which authorized a two year extension of the Commission's sunset provision. While the Commission attempted to meet the timelines and schedules in the original legislation, additional time was needed for preparation and adoption of the Commission's Land Use and Resource Management Plan for the Primary Zone of the Delta. The time needed for local government processing of the General Plan amendments exceeded that set out in the original legislation. In addition to the two year time extension, the new legislation requires that the Commission meet at least once every two months and eliminates the ten percent surcharge on fines collected in the Primary Zone.

Status of the Land Use and Resource Management Plan:

The Commission adopted the Land Use and Resource Management Plan for the Primary Zone of the Delta (Delta Plan) on February 23, 1995.

Within the Stone Lakes Wildlife Refuge, approximately 250 acres of agricultural lands was restored to seasonal wetland habitat during June 1996 (of 457 acre Lewis-Vyronis Property acquired in 1995).

3. Conversion of Agricultural Lands in the Primary Zone to Other Uses:

A project approved in Solano County will convert 40 acres of agricultural land to aquaculture in the form of 48 fish ponds (June 1996).

Agricultural lands are still proposed for conversion for a new wastewater treatment plant east of Rio Vista (Solano County) and for disposal of treated wastewater and sludge on Jersey Island (Contra Costa County); there was no action on either of these projects during 1996.

Proposals to convert agricultural lands to residential development are still under consideration in Yolo County near Clarksburg and in Sacramento County near Courtland; there has been no action on either of these projects during 1996.

4. Restoring Delta Habitat.

State and federal agencies and nonprofit groups have continued to acquire land and pursue programs to restore those lands to Delta habitat (see above Yolo Bypass Wetlands project; acquisition and restoration in the Stone Lakes Wildlife Refuge and Cosumnes River Preserve, Project Island, and for Little Holland Tract and Liberty Island).

In April, Department of Water Resources re-installed the acoustic fish barrier across the mouth of Georgiana Slough to continue the experiment to deter juvenile salmon from entering the Central Delta and keeping them traveling downstream towards the Pacific Ocean.

In March, Wildlife Conservation Board purchased a wetland conservation easement for 261 acres of historic wetlands on Empire Tract, San Joaquin County. Commercial agriculture will be phased out under the new easement.

The Commission staff has been actively participating in the San Francisco Estuary Project's Delta work group which has been developing a consensus-based program for protecting and enhancing in-channel islands.

The Commission was briefed in February on the Department of Fish and Game's participation in the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program. The program is being expanded in the Delta area, particularly waterways near ship channels and ports.

The Commission was briefed in February on the new Deltakeeper program, a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting water quality in the Delta.

6. Providing Increased Public Access and Recreation Opportunities.

The Commission continued its study existing recreational use of the Delta. Department of Boating and Waterways is co-sponsor of the study; the Department of Parks and Recreation is carrying out the survey. The survey will be completed in 1997.

In the Primary Zone, two marinas in Contra Costa County were approved for restoration and/or enlargement including: Linquist Marina to add 37 berths (June 1996) and Orwood Resort to add hookups for 80 campsites, add dry boat storage and build a new sewage treatment facility (October).

The San Joaquin County permit issued to Tower Park Marina for a recreational vehicle park expired in March.

The Commission discussed and directed staff to work with Department of Fish and Game and East Bay Regional Plan District (EBRPD) on the subject of hunting on water-covered lands in the Primary Zone at Big Break (November). The eastern half of Big Break was acquired by EBRPD in October 1995.

Significant progress continues to be made on waterfront plans for the cities in the Secondary Zone including Sacramento, West Sacramento, and Stockton. The City of Stockton prepared and adopted a Waterfront Vision and Action Plan in January 1996 which would support public access and recreation along the downtown waterfront. In August, the City of Sacramento authorized 1.2 million dollars worth of waterfront improvements including a pedestrian promenade and 80 boat slips.

In the Secondary Zone of Solano County, the Western Railroad Museum facility will be enlarged (the train tracks extend into the Primary Zone) (June 1996).

Actions Supporting the Goals of the Act:

The Commission continued to proceed on several fronts with activities and actions which promote the goals and programs outlined in the Act:

- * The Commission continues to act as sponsor for the San Francisco Estuary Project's regional meetings in the Delta to forward the goals and programs in the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan for the Bay and Delta. The group has been focused on protection and enhancement of in-channel islands, the last remnants of historic Delta habitat.
- * The Commission continues to prepare a geographic information system (GIS) to monitor activities and land use changes in the Delta as directed by the Act. This information is available to the public in the Commission's office and through the Internet (June 1996).
- * The Commission continued work with Department of Parks and Recreation on preparation of a statistically valid recreational use survey of the Delta. The survey will be completed in Spring of 1997.
- * Staff prepares a monthly project monitoring memo which lists and describes pending projects (local, state, and federal projects) in the Delta area.
- * The Commission monitors activities associated with the San Luis Drain and release of agricultural wastewaters into the Delta. The Commission position, adopted in 1995, is support of a resolution of the issue in a manner that protects the environmental values of the Delta.
- * The Commission and staff have actively participated in the CALFED planning process, particularly in light of how the program might affect agriculture, wildlife habitat, and recreation in the Delta Primary Zone.
- * The Commission held hearings and adopted a strategy for developing a funding and regulatory program to allow swift removal of abandoned vessels from the Delta waterways (June). This concept has widespread support from various sectors of the Delta. Staff will work with Delta legislators to seek new legislation in the upcoming session.

Administration

The Commission offices are located in Walnut Grove in Sacramento County. Margit Aramburu is the Executive Director, with Debra Eddy as full time support staff. Supplemental assistance is provided by part-time student assistants. Richard Frank, Supervising Deputy Attorney with the Attorney General's Office, provides legal support for the Commission, with assistance from Christine Sproul. Operating costs of the Commission are approximately \$14,500 per month. The Commission is funded by funds from three special funds; no general funds are used to support the Commission.

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Exhibit A

Exhibit B

Summary of Projects Approved in the Primary Zone in 1996:

PROJECTS APPROVED BY THE FIVE COUNTIES:

Subdivisions:

1. L. Chan; Randall Island, Sacramento County
57 acres into 2 parcels
2/96
2. L. Mealer; Andrus Island, Sacramento County
84.9 acres into 2 parcels
1/96
3. Rugaard/Romanini; Grand Island, Sacramento County
160 acres into 2 parcels
4/96
4. D. Elliott; Randall Island, Sacramento County
200 acres into 4 parcels
7/96
5. M/M Wiseman; Grand Island, Sacramento County
37 acres into 2 parcels
11/96
6. Delta Estates Homeowners, Walnut Grove, Sacramento County
10.6 acres into 48 lots (lots are already developed)
11/96
7. Ryde Estates/Leary; Grand Island, Sacramento County
8 acres into 4 parcels (consistent with existing zoning)
10/96
8. Basell Land Co.; Empire Tract, San Joaquin County
543 acres into 4 parcels
3/96
9. Fiddymment Family Partnership; New Hope Tract, San Joaquin County
367 acres into 2 parcels
2/96

18. Maintenance Dredge Stockton Ship Channel, Corps
Deepwater Ship Channel between Kimball Island and Port; Contra
Costa, Sacramento, and San Joaquin Counties
8/96
19. South Delta Temporary Barriers, Dept. Water Resources
Old River, Middle River and Grant Line Canal; San Joaquin County
Time Extension until 2001
6/96
20. Levee Repair (2.6 miles), Corps/Reclamation Board
Miner, Elk, Steamboat and Sutter Sloughs; Sacramento, Yolo and
Solano Counties
11/96